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AUTHOR Porter, Jeffrey L.
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ABSTRACT

Many community college student activities and programs focus on programming for the traditional college-aged student. However, appropriate support and meaningful extra-curricular activities are also needed for the ever-increasing number of adult students. Specially designed activities for adult students can be very helpful in: (1) integrating the adult into the campus environment; (2) building self-esteem; (3) fostering camaraderie among adults; and (4) assisting adults to deal with the unique demands and constraints they face when attending college. Targeted for older students, Nontraditional Students Organizations (NTSO's) will serve a large segment of the student body, aid in retention, serve as an advocacy group, and augment the existing student activities program. When forming an NTSO, care should be taken to recognize adults' time constraints and plan convenient meeting times; include significant others in organizational activities; develop a calendar of events for the full semester; communicate via direct correspondence rather than bulletin boards; and plan appropriate events. The NTSO should develop a constitution, organize meetings to maximize attendance, elect officers, and build in some form of recognition for members. The NTSO at Patrick Henry Community College is involved in fund-raising efforts, social functions, community services, and special projects, such as the development of a used book network, a child care needs assessment survey, and a scholarship program. (WJT)

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EMPOWERING THE NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT THROUGH ADULT-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

Jeffrey L. Porter
Director
Center for Nontraditional Studies
Patrick Henry Community College
Martinsville, Virginia

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CONCURRENT SESSION PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Presenter: Jeffrey L. Porter
Director: Center For Nontraditional Studies
Patrick Henry Community College
P.O. Drawer 5311
Martinsville, Virginia 24115
O: (703) 638-8777 ext. 221
H: (703) 647-4985

Abstract:

"Empowering The Nontraditional Student Through Adult-Specific Programming"

Many community college student activities and programs focus on programming for the traditional aged college student. However, an institutional response is warranted in providing appropriate support and meaningful extra-curricular activities for the ever increasing heterogeneous adult student population.

This presentation will focus on methods of integrating the adult into the campus environment with emphasis on formulating and implementing innovative extra-curricular activities for adult students. In addition, the presentation will involve active discussion and practical suggestions concerning how adult-specific programming can be successful given the unique demands and constraints adults often have to cope with during college.

Anyone interested in developing and implementing campus organizations or events specifically for adult students may benefit from this presentation.

"Empowering The Nontraditional Student Through Adult Specific Programming"

Most community college activities programs focus on programming for the traditional aged college student, ignoring the fact that adults represent the majority headcount at most two-year, nonresidential institutions. Theoretically, the adult is the "typical" student in this scenario. However, for various reasons, these "typical" students, for the most part, do not participate in traditional college activities in great numbers. Conceptually, little is being done to encourage adult specific programming. To this end, a new approach of programming is warranted in providing appropriate support and meaningful extra-curricular activities for the ever increasing heterogeneous adult student population.

It is no secret to student personnel professionals that adult students are quite different from their younger counterparts. For instance, while many traditional aged students are "breaking ties" with family, many students are nurturing families: many without the assistance of a life-partner. For a variety of reasons, the single parent adult student and their varied life problems are becoming increasingly visible on the community college campus, the least of which is the problem of child care. To recruit adults for participation, it is necessary to accommodate children and other family members. Therefore, incorporating the significant others of adult students is an integral part of adult-specific programming.

In addition, adult students often express a desire to "network" with others similar to themselves in age, lifestyle, maturity, and seriousness of intent regarding educational pursuits. Additional support mechanisms to increase self-esteem and provide social support is needed beyond traditional counseling and assessment. In turn, these additional services aid in retention of adult students. To this end, adult-specific programming can be beneficial for the student and the institution.

This presentation will focus on methods of integrating the adult into the campus environment with emphasis on formulating and implementing innovative successful extra curricular activities for adult students. Experiential activities will be utilized to simulate more in-depth esteem building; and exercise which foster camaraderie among adults. Successful adult specific, and means of incorporating significant others. In addition, examples of potential resource people who have developed/implemented successful adult-specific programming will be distributed.

By incorporating the often neglected adult student into the social/cultural realm the community college activities, one ethical dilemma in higher education will be eradicated.

ADULT-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

1. **Select Appropriate Meeting Times**

   No one time for meetings will ever be convenient for all nontraditional students, select the best time convenient for a significant number of students or choose to have a day meeting and an evening meeting. Weekends events are sometimes best for many nontraditional students.

2. **Recognize Time Constraints**

   Many nontraditional students have very little free time due to a number of other obligations. Recognize that their time commitment is limited by keeping meetings brief.

3. **Include Significant Others**

   Since many adults have obligations to other people such as spouses, boyfriends/girlfriends, and/or children, include them in meetings and activities, for example, providing a movie room with chaperone for younger children during social events. This allows the student to participate to a much greater degree as he/she can accommodate several roles simultaneously.

4. **Develop a Calendar**

   Due to the many demands on an adult students' schedule, by planning a calendar of events each semester for the club/ organization increased participation will be guaranteed as the student can make advanced plans. (see attached)

5. **Communicate Via Direct Correspondence**

   Adults are less likely to read bulletin boards, or pick up newsletters or campus publications. Therefore, calendars and all other publications/announcements should be sent directly to the students' mailing address.

6. **Plan Appropriate Events**

   Let the membership decide what events they would like to pursue. Initially, do not advise the membership to tackle multiple projects. One social event, one community service project, and one fundraiser per semester are plenty to keep everyone busy. (example attached)

WHY DEVELOP A NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS' ORGANIZATION

1. **Serves a large segment of the student body.**

   Most community colleges boast a large number of adult students, both in the day and in the evening. Adult students over the age of 25 make up as much as 50% of some institutional student bodies.

2. **Aids in retention**

   Although no statistics are available, it is very likely that students who "get involved" are more likely to be retained.

3. **Promotes self-esteem**

   Group activities and individual projects in the context of a "common cause" enhances learning in the classroom. Motivational and self-esteem building activities, such as inspirational guest speakers, are instrumental in promoting individual self-esteem and developing group identification and pride.

4. **Develops an advocacy group**

   Groups are more powerful than individuals in developing and initiating specific agendas which may affect institutional changes/reforms. In addition, a network of adults provides for increased communication, activity, and retention.

5. **Augments a well-rounded student activities program**

   Adult participation quickly becomes contagious. Other organizations on campus benefit from adult participation and the richness of their life experiences.

HOW DOES A NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS' ORGANIZATION OPERATE?

1. **Establishing Attendance**

   * If possible, require attendance for a group of adults at a seminar/meeting. This can be accomplished by establishing a required 1 hour seminar course for gender equity grant participants (or other homogeneous groups of adults on campus).

   * If required attendance is not an option, have several initial meetings at varying times both during the day and in the evening. Do mass mailings to all adults and as many nontraditional students as possible. (Institutional Data Processing can be an invaluable resource)

2. **Developing and Implementing a Constitution**

   * Work within the institutional mission.

   * Establish specific goals and objectives.

3. **Organizational Meetings**

   * Hold meetings during the student activities period to insure attendance.

   * Also hold evening meetings prior to evening courses (5-6 pm, for example, if regular evening courses begin at 6:00 pm).

   * Meet twice per month (approx. every two weeks)

   * Try to keep meetings brief. If minor issues need to be discussed or if specific concerns become apparent, establish a committee of members to bring forth recommendations to be voted on by the membership at large.

4. **Role of Officers/Sponsor**

   * Officers elected by majority vote.

   * Presidents, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Chairperson.

   * Sponsor should be willing to be extremely involved.

5. **Recognition**

   * Build in some method of recognition for those members who work hard for the organization. (Scholarships, News releases, Certificates of Appreciation).

PHCC's NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS' ORGANIZATION (NTSO) ACTIVITIES
FALL 1987 - SPRING 1990

	1987 -88	1988 - 89	1989 - 90
Fundraising Efforts	Breakfast Sales ($700 Raised) Concessions at Xmas Crafts Fair ($200 Raised)	NTSO Raffle ($1300 Raised) Concessions at Phantasy ($300 Raised)	NTSO Raffle ($1100 Raise
Social Functions	Three Pot Luck Luncheons with Inspirational Speakers Christmas Social (175 attended) Family Fun Day (150	Fall Mixer/Social (Day) (50 attended) Fall Mixer/Social (Night) (100 attended) Christmas Social (125 attended)	1st NTSO Reunion (80 attended) For Current/Former Participants Fall Mixer/Social (125 attended) Spring Mixer/Social (100 attended)
Community Services	Community Awareness Activities	Easter Celebration For Underpriviledged Children	HUGO Relief Project LANDSCAPING PROJECT at Citizens Against Family Violence Participated in Dance fo Heart
Special Projects	Used Book Network NTSO Directory Compiled	Campus-wide Child Care Needs Assessment Survey PHCC Student Awards Banquet $800 Awarded in Scholarships Used Book Network	Used Book Network NTSO T-Shirts NTSO Ribbons for Graduat PHCC Student Awards Banq $1300 Awarded in Scholar ships Presentation at VCCA Convention

Nontraditional Students Organization

Fall Activities Calendar

(REVISED)

October 1989

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

OCTOBER:

5 **NTSO Meeting:** 12:30PM in Room 214

19 **NTSO Meeting:** 12:30PM in Room 214
* Begin Annual Fundraiser: **NTSO RAFFLE**
Everyone asked to sell 1 book of 25 tickets. Pick up tickets in Nontraditional Studies Office

November 1989

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

NOVEMBER:

2 **NTSO Meeting:** 12:30PM in Room 214

16 **NTSO Meeting:** 12:30PM in room 214

17 **NTSO FALL COVERED DISH SOCIAL**
(Please call Tammy Watkins at Ext. 233 by Nov. 15 to let us know how many guests you will be bringing) Everyone is asked to bring a favorite dish:Meats will be catered.

27 All unsold raffle tickets and all proceeds collected in the Center For Nontraditional Studies.

December 1989

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	11	12	13	14	15	16
7	18	19	20	21	22	23
4	25	26	27	28	29	30
1						

DECEMBER:

3 Winners of the Second Annual NTSO Raffle announced at the PHCC Christmas Crafts Fair

7 **NTSO MEETING:** 12:30PM in room 214

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